

company and its founder so special is that Nelson is not just focused on running an economically successful company, but doing so in a responsible way. The company specifically focuses on using natural resources responsibly, thereby saving both water and energy with its innovative products.

If one drives through my home district of eastern Washington, you can't help but spot some of Nelson's products at work. These innovative irrigation systems are helping to produce food for an expanding global population. In fact, Nelson recognizes the importance of their innovative products not just helping feed a growing population, but improving the quality of life for countless people throughout this country and the world.

Madam Speaker, with such innovative, dedicated, and sincere entrepreneurs as Bart Nelson helping to expand the irrigation products to new levels, I am confident that both eastern Washington and the United States can look forward to a future of world-class innovation and prosperity in the agricultural industry.

HONORING THE 125TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RINGLING BROTHERS CIRCUS

HON. TAMMY BALDWIN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 8, 2009

Ms. BALDWIN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the 125th anniversary of the Ringling Brothers Circus and to recognize the role of both the Circus World Museum and the Wisconsin Historical Society in the preservation of circus industry history. The Ringling Brothers Circus has become a celebrated national entertainment enterprise based in Baraboo, Wisconsin, while the Circus World Museum and Wisconsin Historical Society have developed an impressive collection of circus artifacts and knowledge.

The Ringling Brothers Circus rose to prominence under the leadership of several Baraboo area brothers, eventually becoming one of the most successful entertainment enterprises in American history. This circus has contributed to the economic and cultural vitality of Wisconsin since the Ringling brothers gave their first performance on May 19, 1884. Though Chas, Al, John, Alf, and Otto Ringling launched their small business with less than \$100 in assets, these five Baraboo natives went on to purchase the world famous Barnum and Bailey Circus. The organization continued to grow, exhibiting the unique talents and showmanship of this Sauk County family for hundreds of audiences across the country. Combining their passion for performance with an entrepreneurial spirit, the Ringling brothers created one of the longest-running entertainment enterprises in the world. The work of the Ringling brothers and the success of their circus provide impressive examples for ambitious performers and business people everywhere. I am proud of the group's contributions to both the state of Wisconsin and to audiences throughout America.

Over the past half century, the Wisconsin Historical Society and the Circus World Museum have become stewards of circus industry memorabilia and information. Baraboo is home to one of the largest collections of his-

torical circus artifacts in the world, and the Circus World Museum's Robert L. Parkinson Library and Research Center has become the world's foremost research facility for circus history. With objects dating back to 1793, these organizations are leaders, both on a local and national level, in the preservation of circus materials. By maintaining the documents, objects, and knowledge base associated with the circus, the Wisconsin Historical Society and the Circus World Museum have conserved a valuable aspect of our national heritage. The Historical Society's work on behalf of the Ringling Brothers Circus, as well as the circus industry as a whole, serves as an ideal example of its dedication to the local communities and to the enrichment of society through historical preservation.

The citizens of Baraboo can be proud of their city, and its role as the first home to the "Greatest Show on Earth." Since its inception, the Ringling Brothers Circus has cultivated a reputation for excellence in entertainment, while the Circus World Museum has set the standard for circus history preservation. I therefore commend Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus for its sustained contributions to the national circus industry, as well as the Wisconsin Historical Society and the Circus World Museum, for their dedication to circus history and research.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE AUTHORITIES AND CORRECTIONS ACT OF 2009

SPEECH OF

HON. PAUL TONKO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 7, 2009

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, as a new Member of Congress, I have spent this year actively seeking opportunities to offer constructive legislative proposals on issues important to my constituents and to the Nation. I have been honored to sponsor measures dealing with improving highway safety and fostering research and development for alternative energy.

In addition to my other legislation focused on energy and transportation safety, I also directed my staff to contact the National Parks, Forests and Public Lands Subcommittee because the protection and preservation of our parks, heritage areas, forests and public lands are of vital interest to me and the people I represent.

The committee informed me that the National Park Service needed legislation to deal with a number of technical concerns facing the agency, and I was honored to act as the sponsor.

H.R. 3804 includes 10-year reauthorizations for two important advisory boards, the National Park System Advisory Board and the National Park Service Concession Management Advisory Board.

The National Park System Advisory Board was first authorized in 1935 and advises the NPS Director and the Secretary of the Interior on matters relating to the agency, the National Park System, and programs administered by the NPS, including the designation of national historic landmarks and proposed national historic trails. A full, 10-year reauthorization of

the Board is critical to maintaining the excellent management standards set by the National Park Service.

The Concession Management Advisory Board was established by the National Parks Omnibus Management Act of 1998. The seven-member panel advises the Secretary of the Interior and the National Park Service on matters relating to the effective management of concessions in units of the National Park System. Reauthorization of this Board is important to ensure that the lodging, transportation, dining and other services provided to park visitors are of the very highest quality.

H.R. 3804 also raises the ceiling for the popular Volunteers in Parks program from \$3.5 million to \$10 million. Volunteers, of course, are not paid, but many receive reimbursement for travel costs or other small expenses. Our national parks simply could not function without these volunteers, and the VIP program is really the least we can do to repay their enormous contributions.

At the request of the National Park Service, H.R. 3804 changes the designation of the Martin Luther King, Junior, National Historic Site in Atlanta to the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park, to better reflect the size and complexity of the unit.

The bill also makes several minor boundary adjustments that will allow the National Park Service to cooperate with other sites near the U.S.S. Arizona Memorial to make ticketing easier for visitors and makes technical corrections for six provisions in the omnibus parks bill from earlier this year.

Finally, H.R. 3804 will strengthen law enforcement in our national parks by increasing and standardizing penalties for violations of park laws.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this bill so that our Park Service can move to a more stable future.

THE HEALTH CARE REALITY CHECK ACT

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 8, 2009

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, today I am proud to introduce the Health Care Reality Check Act of 2009.

It has become clear that some of my colleagues in Congress lack proper perspective on the urgency of health reform because, ironically, as Members of Congress we enjoy some of the best health security in the world through our government-administered health care:

All Members of Congress are eligible—and most participate in—the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program, which provides all Federal employees with a Government-negotiated insurance exchange that is subsidized by their employer: the Federal Government;

Almost 150 Members of Congress qualify for Medicare, a single-payer Government insurance plan;

The 121 Senators and Representatives who served in our Armed Forces are eligible for the "socialized" health care we provide for all veterans; and

Members who aren't veterans can avail themselves to a similar "socialized" program—